



Charlotte Mason's House of Education,  
Scale How, Ambleside, UK, 2009

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develop thought, concentration, the power to apply principles to the solution of new problems, etc.

One point which the psychologist impresses on us is the folly of attempting to exercise one set of faculties for too long a time together: this produces brain-weariness and often ends in abortive efforts. It should be the teacher's care to limit the time given to the exercise of any one set of faculties, according to the age and capacity of the child. Very little children can with difficulty be led to give full attention to one subject for more than twenty minutes; the most advanced pupils should not be expected to concentrate effort in one direction for more than an hour at a time. This does not apply to subjects which are chiefly manual, such as drawing or sewing.

Different branches of study stimulate different faculties, and, consequently, work should be so arranged that the alternation of subjects which demand great mental effort, with those which are chiefly mechanical, will in itself provide the necessary brain-rest.

The educational value of various subjects is an interesting question, but one too lengthy for discussion here. In passing, we may notice a somewhat popular theory that the value of a subject is in proportion to its practical utility. One sometimes hears the complaint that when a boy leaves school he is not ready to take up some given occupation without further training.

But the object of education is not to produce an accomplished shorthand writer or salesman, but to produce culture—that is, to bring about the complete development of the individual, the harmonious evolution of the physical and intellectual powers, of the moral and emotional natures. To secure such development, prominence must be given, amongst other things, to those studies which furnish the greatest amount of mental discipline, and provide for the best and most rational exercises of the faculties.

I fear that I have exhausted your patience, yet I am but on the outskirts of my subject, having touched upon one or two only of the laws of intellectual development. The other two functions of mind—feeling and willing—are too important to be hastily dealt with at the conclusion of an already lengthy paper; I should prefer to leave them wholly unnoticed.

## “OURSELVES, OUR SOULS, AND BODIES.”

*Book of Common Prayer.*

“Self-reverence, self-knowledge, self-control.”—*Tennyson.*

BY THE EDITOR.

(Continued from page 55.)

### THE HOUSE OF BODY.

#### I.

WE will first consider the Esquires of the Body; not that they are the chief Officers of State, but in Mansoul as in the world, a great deal depends upon the least important people; and the Esquires of the Body have it very much in their power to make all go right or all go wrong in Mansoul.

Their work is very necessary for the well-being of the State. They build up the Body, and they see to it that there shall always be a new Mansoul to take the place of the old when that shall pass away. If each would attend to his own business and nothing else, all would go well: but there is a great deal of rivalry in the government, and every member tries to make the Prime Minister believe that the happiness of Mansoul depends upon him. If any one of these gets things into his own hands, all is in disorder.

*Esquire Hunger* is the first of the appetites that comes to our notice. He is a most useful fellow. If he does not come down to breakfast in the morning, a poor meal is eaten, and for neither work nor play go well in Mansoul that day. If, for weeks together, Hunger does not sit down to table, thin fingers and hollow cheeks will show you what a good servant has left his post. He is easily slighted. If people say, “I hate” bread and milk, or eggs, or mutton or what not, and think about it and think about it, Hunger is disgusted and goes. But if they sit down to their meals without thinking about what they eat, and think of something more interesting, Hunger helps them through, bit by bit, until their plates are emptied, and new material has been taken in to build up their bodies. Hunger is not at all fond of dainties. He likes things



plain and nice; and directly a person begins to feed upon dainties, like pastry, rich cake, too many sweets, Hunger goes, or rather, he changes his character and becomes Gluttony. It is as Gluttony that he tries to get the ear of the Prime Minister, and says: "Leave it all to me, and I will make Mansoul happy. He shall want nothing but what I can give him." Then begins a fine time. As long as Hunger was his servant, Mansoul thought nothing about his meals till the time for them came, and then he eat them with a good appetite. But Gluttony behaves differently. Gluttony leads his victim to confectionery-shop windows and makes him think how nice this or that would taste: all his pocket-money now goes in tarts, sweets and toffee. He thinks at breakfast what pudding he should like for dinner, and asks for it as a favour. Indeed he is always begging for bits of cake, and spoonfuls of jam and extra chocolates. He does not think much about his lessons because he has a penny in his pocket and is considering what is the nicest thing he can buy for it; or, if he is older, perhaps he has a pound, but his thought is still the same, and Gluttony gets it all. The greedy person turns away from wholesome meals, and does not care for work or play, because Gluttony has got the ear of the Prime Minister, and almost every thought of Mansoul turns one way—"What shall I eat?" he says. Gluttony begins with the little boy and goes with him all through life, only that instead of caring for chocolate creams when he is a man, he cares for great dinners two hours long.

But, you will say, if Hunger builds up the body, surely Gluttony must do so a great deal faster. It is true that sometimes the greedy person becomes fat, but it is muscle and not fat which makes the body strong and useful. Gluttony does not make muscle, and does cause horrid illnesses.

The way to keep this enemy out of Mansoul is to stick to the rules which Hunger lays down. The chief of them is—Never think of your meals till they come, and, while you are eating, talk and think of something more amusing than your food. As for nice things, of course we all want nice things now and then; but let us eat what is given to us of the chocolate or fruit at table and not think any more about it. There are no sweets or fruits served at school, we know, and

then it is quite fair for a boy to allow himself to spend a certain part of his pocket-money in this way, not only for himself, but that he may have something to give away. But the boy who spends the whole, or the greater part, of his week's money on things to eat, or, who is always begging for hampers of things from home, is a poor fellow, the victim of Gluttony. The best plan is to want to spend your money upon something else—some sort of collection, perhaps; or to want to save up to buy a present or a fishing-rod or anything worth having. Gluttony lets you alone when you cease to think of him and his good things.

## II.

Another most serviceable Esquire of the Body is *Thirst*. How serviceable he is you will understand when you think that by far the greater part of a man's weight is made up of water. This water is always wasting away in one way or another, and the business of Thirst is to make up for the loss. Thirst is a simple fellow; the beverage he likes best is pure cold water; and, indeed, he is quite right, for, when you come to think of it, there is only one thing to drink in the world, though we drink it mixed with many things. Sometimes the mixing is done by nature, as in milk; sometimes by man, as in tea or coffee. Some of these mixed drinks are wholesome, because they contain food as well as drink, and by far the most wholesome of these is milk.

But Thirst himself does not care for or need anything in the water he drinks. He likes it best clear and cold, and if we lived in hot Eastern countries we should know how delicious water is. All little children like water, but bigger boys and girls sometimes like various things, such as lemon juice, in their water to give it a flavour. Though there is no harm in this, it is rather a pity, because they lose their taste for water itself.

You would think that so simple and useful an Esquire of the Body could never be a source of danger to Mansoul. But he also gets the ear of the Prime Minister; he also says, "Leave Mansoul to me and he shall never more want anything in the world but what I can give him." This saying of his is quite true, only, instead of calling him Thirst any longer, we must call him Drunkenness; and once



Drunkenness has a man in his grip, that man wants nothing but drink, drink, from morning till night.

The chairs and tables out of his house, his children's bread, their mother's clothes, all go to buy drink. The man's time, health and strength are spent in drink: he becomes homeless and friendless, sick and outcast, for the sake of drink. But he does not crave for home or friends; all he wants is more drink and more drink. By far the greater part of the sin, misery and poverty in the world is caused by Drunkenness.

As you know very well, it is not pure water that causes Drunkenness. Men have discovered how to prepare a substance called alcohol, and this it is that ruins thousands of men and women. Many good men and women, and children, too, make a solemn vow that they will never taste ale or wine or strong drink unless a doctor orders it by way of medicine. They do this, not only for fear that they should themselves become drunkards—though indeed there is no knowing who may fall into that terrible temptation—but because every little good deed helps to stop the evil in the world by setting a good example to somebody; and perhaps there is never a good example set but someone follows it, though the person who set the example may never know.

This is one reason why it is well to keep one's taste for cold water, and to know how delicious it is.

### III.

I hardly know by what names to call the two Esquires of the Body whom I am now to introduce to you, but both are good body servants. Perhaps *Restlessness* and *Rest* will do as well as any. You have noticed that a baby is never quite still when he is wide awake: he is kicking his legs about, or playing with his fingers or toes, or crawling, or clutching or throwing something down or picking it up, or laughing, or crowing, or crying. Little boys and girls, too, cannot bear to sit still long at lessons. They want to run into the garden and see what their pet frog is doing. When lessons are over a good romp is delightful, or a race, or a good deal of tumbling about head-over-heels. Later, people want to play cricket or football, or to ride bicycles, or climb mountains. They think they do all these things just because it is fun; but, really, good Esquire *Restless* will not let them alone, but

gives them an uneasy feeling if they are not pretty often doing something which is rather hard to do and rather tiring. He is playing the part of a faithful Body Servant. He is helping to make Mansoul a strong and wiry body, able to swim and ride, to jump and run; able to walk far and to hit true and to do every service that the Prime Minister may require. In fact, the business of *Restlessness* is to strengthen and harden the muscles which *Hunger* feeds.

*Restlessness*, from being a good servant, might become a hard master; indeed he sometimes does become so, and people do things that are too hard for them in the way of rowing or climbing or something of that sort. Worse still, the Dæmon of *Restlessness* possesses them, and they cannot settle to any kind of work or play because they always want to be doing something else. This is a very unfortunate state to get into, because it is only by going on doing one thing steadily that we learn to do it well, whether it be cricket or algebra; so it is well to be on the watch for the moment when *Restlessness*, the good servant, turns into *Restlessness*, the unquiet Dæmon who drives us about from post to pillar and will not give us firm standing ground anywhere in life. In a general way, his fellow-servant and brother, *Rest*, steps in with, "It is my turn now," and the tired person is glad to sit down and be quiet for a little, or lie on his face with a book, or, best of all, go to sleep soundly at night and wake up refreshed and ready for anything. Thus the muscles take such turns of work and rest as helps them to grow and become strong.

I daresay you are glad to hear of an Esquire of the Body who is not followed by a black shadow threatening Mansoul with ruin; but, alas, I cannot let you off. *Rest*, too, has his Dæmon, whose name is *Sloth*. "A little more sleep, a little more slumber, a little folding of the hands to sleep," is the petition with which he besieges the Prime Minister. Once *Sloth* is ruler in Mansoul, the person cannot wake up in the morning, dawdles over his dressing, comes down late for breakfast, hates a walk, can't bear games, dawdles over his preparation, does not want to make boats or whistles, or collect stamps, drops in all his lessons, is in the third form when he ought to be in the sixth, saunters about the corners of the playing field with his hands in his pockets, never does



anything for anybody, not because he is unkind or ill-natured, but because he will not take the trouble. Poor fellow, he does not know that he is falling daily more and more under the power of a hard master. The less he exerts himself, the less he is able to exert himself, because the muscles which Restlessness keeps firm and in good order Sloth relaxes and weakens until it becomes a labour to raise the hand to the head or to drag one foot after another. People used to be very much afraid of Sloth and to call him one of the Seven Deadly Sins, but somehow he is less thought about now; perhaps because people find so many things to do that they cannot bear to be slothful. Still, if your friends call you idle about play or work, or, worse, indolent, or, worse still, lazy, pull yourself together without loss of time, for be sure the Dæmon, Sloth, is upon you, and once you get into his clutches you are in as bad a case and your life is as nearly ruined as if Gluttony or Drunkenness had got hold of you. But take courage, the escape is easy: Restlessness is on the alert to save you from Sloth in the beginning. Up and be doing, whether at work or play.

## IV.

We have seen how each of the Appetites—Hunger, Thirst, the wish for Rest—is a good body servant, and how the work of each is to build up and refresh the body. We have seen, too, how a life may be ruined by each of these so innocent-seeming appetites if it is allowed to get the mastery. To save ourselves from this fate, we must eat, drink, sleep at regular times, and then not allow ourselves to think of taking our ease, of dainty things to eat, of nice things to drink, in the intervals. We should always have something worth while to think about that we may not let our minds dwell upon unworthy matters.

There is another Appetite which is subject to the same rules as those we have considered. It has its time like eating and sleeping, but its time is not until people are married. Just as eating, drinking, and sleeping are designed to help to make us strong, healthy, and beautiful bodies, so this other Appetite is meant to secure that people shall have children, so that there will always be people in the world, young people growing up as old people pass away. This Appetite is

connected with a certain part of your body; and I should not speak to you about it now only that one of the great duties we have in the world is to keep this part of the body pure. It is just like that tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil planted in the Garden of Eden. You remember that Adam and Eve were not to take thereof or they should surely die; and then, you remember, how the tempter came and told Eve that they should not die if they took of it, but should be like gods, knowing good and evil. Well, just in the same way, I fear, you may find tempters who will do their best to make you know about things you ought not to know about, to talk about and read about and do things you ought not to talk about, or read about, or do. I daresay they will tell you these things are quite right, that you would not have such parts of your body and such feelings about them unless you were meant to think and do these things. Now it will help you to know that this is the sin of Uncleaness, the most deadly and loathsome of all sins, the sin that all nice men and women hate and shrink from more than from any other. The opposite virtue is called Purity, and Christ has said—"Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." That does not mean, I think, "shall see God" when they die, but "shall see Him" with the eye of their soul, about them and beside them, and shall know whenever temptation comes through this Appetite—"Thou, God, seest me." That thought will come home to them so that they will not be able to make themselves unclean by even a thought or a word. They will turn away their eyes from beholding evil, they will not allow themselves to read, or hear, or say a word that should cause impure thoughts. Thus they will glorify God in their bodies; and every boy and girl who realises this is a hero in the sight of God, is fighting a good fight, and is making the world better. When the pure marry, their children will be blessed because they have pure parents. Remember that God puts before each of us in this matter the choice between good and evil, obedience and disobedience, which he put before Adam and Eve. They sinned, and death entered into the world. And so surely as you allow yourself in this sin of Uncleaness, even to think a thought which you could not go straight and tell your mother, death begins in you, death of body and soul. Fight the good fight and do not let



yourselves, like our first parents, be the victims of unholy curiosity. Let each of the Appetites, so necessary to our bodies, be our servant and not our master, and remember, above all things, that sin and slavery to any Appetite begins in our thoughts. It is our thoughts that we must rule, and the way to rule them is very simple. We just have to think of something else, something really interesting and nice, with a prayer in our hearts to God to help us to do so.

## V.

The Esquires of the Body have in turn their attendants, their pages, let us call them, very useful persons in their way, but, like the esquires, they require looking after—in the first place, to see that they do their work, in the next, to secure that they do not become tyrants. But even they, servants of servants as they are, aim, if they are indulged, at the sole rule and subjection of Mansoul. People sometimes call these pages, feelings, but we will call them sensations, because it is through the five senses that they do their work.

The Sensation of *Taste*, one of these, is not only usually agreeable, but is most useful. When food tastes unpleasant that is often a sign that it is not wholesome. Taste is an excellent servant, and people who know how to keep him in order find simple foods, such as milk, and bread and butter, delicious. But people who pamper taste make themselves his servants. They say they do not like porridge; they do not like mutton, potatoes, eggs. They want things with strong flavours to please their Taste; the older they grow the more difficult it will be to please them, so that at least it will take a French cook to think of things quite nice enough for their dinners. The best rule is not to allow oneself in daintiness about food, but to eat what is set before one; indeed, a wise person is rather glad when something is served which he does not exactly like, or when he has to take disagreeable medicine, because this gives him an opportunity to keep Taste in his proper place, that of a servant and not of a master. It is a good plan not to talk about our likes or dislikes, not even to know which kind of jam we like best.

*Smell* is another of these pages, really a very good fellow, and I do not know that he tries much for mastery in Mansoul

unless as the ally of Taste. When he goes about sniffing eatables and making Taste wish for them, he is very objectionable; excepting for that he is harmless enough, but he has a fault which is bad in a servant. He is lazy. As his work is very important, this lazy habit must be dealt with. He might be the means of giving Mansoul a great deal of pleasure, because there are many faint, delightful odours in the world, like the odour of a box-hedge, of lime trees in flower, of bog-myrtle, which he might carry and thus add to the pleasure of life. But that is not his only use. He should be quick to detect when there is the least impurity in the air, when a room is close, when a drain is out of order, when there is any unpleasant, unwholesome odour about, however slight; because all odours are really tiny atoms floating in the air, which, by breathing, we take into our bodies. As we breathe all day long and all night long, and only take food three or four times a day, it is perhaps more injurious to health to breathe evil odours than to eat food which is not quite fit, though both are bad. But there are people in whom Smell has become so inactive, that they will lean over an open drain without perceiving any bad smell. By-and-by we hear they are laid up with a fever, and nobody thinks of reproaching that lazy servant Smell who has been the cause of the whole mischief. It is a good rule to practise oneself in catching every sweet and delightful fragrance, and in learning to tell with one's eyes shut, the leaves of various trees by their odours, various flowers by odours, food-stuffs, materials for clothing. In this way Smell would be kept in good working order and should be able to detect when he goes into a room, whether the air is fresh or fusty.

There are five of these pages classed together under the name of The Five Senses, but the three we have now to speak of are not so much pages to Esquires of the Body, as Body-servants themselves. *Touch* is a most pervasive fellow. He is all over the body at once and there are only one or two places like the nails and the teeth where he is not. He collects a great deal of useful information. It is he who discovers whether things be hard or soft, hot or cold, rough or smooth, whether they pierce or scratch, or prick or burn.

You see at once how useful his work is, for without Touch one might accidentally put one's finger in the fire and not



know it was burning. Knives might cut, pins prick, frost bite and fire burn, and we should be none the wiser though our bodies might be receiving deadly injury. Some people have an exceedingly delicate sense of touch, especially in the finger-tips, and this enables them to work at making such delicate things as watch springs and very fine lace. Blind people learn to find out through their finger-tips what their eyes no longer tell them. They learn even the faces of their friends by touch and can tell whether they are well or ill, glad or sorry. You hear it sometimes said that a person has a nice touch in playing the piano, and it would really seem as if his finger-tips felt not only the keys of the instrument but the music they are producing. Some people again, mothers especially, have so kind a touch that their hands seem to smooth away our troubles. But this kind of touch is only learned by loving. You remember Shakespere thought that poor little Prince Arthur had it; certainly many loving children have comforting hands.

Those persons whose senses are the most keen and delicate are the most alive and get most interest out of life; so it is worth while to practise our senses, to shut our eyes, for example, and learn the feel of different sorts of material, different sorts of wood, metal, leaves of trees, different sorts of hair and fur, in fact, whatever one comes across. It will surprise you to hear that Touch, simple and useful servant as he is, is, like the rest, on the watch for mastery over Mansoul. Have you ever found it hard to attend to lessons or other work because you have had a prick or a sting or a cut, which, as you say, "hurts"? When people let themselves think about these little things which can't be helped, they have no thoughts left for what is worth while, thus one of the least of the powers in their lives becomes master of all the rest. You remember the story of the Spartan boy and the fox? It is not necessary that we should be Spartans, because, if anything painful thing can be helped, it is right and necessary that we should speak about it, or do something to take away the cause of the pain. But, on the other hand, I think we should be rather glad to have little things to put up with now and then, a pimple, a mustard poultice, or a vest that pricks, just that we may get into the way of not letting ourselves think about such matters. There

is an instance of a man who was obliged to have his leg cut off, before Sir James Simpson had made the blessed discovery of the use of chloroform. This man was determined that he would not think about the pain, and he succeeded in so keeping his mind occupied with other things, that he was not aware of the operation. This would be too much for most of us, but we might all try to bear the prick of a pin, or even the sting of a wasp without making a fuss.

The two senses that we have still to speak of are ministers of delight to Mansoul, and I do not know that they have any serious faults as servants excepting those of laziness or inattention. *Sight* brings us half our joy. The faces of our friends, gay sunshine, flowers and green grass, and the flickering of the leaves, pretty clothes, and little treasures and pictures, mountains and rivers, and the great sea, where would our joy in all these be if we could not see them? Kind friends might read to us, certainly, but it would not be the same thing always as to have our own book and read it in the apple-tree, or in the corner of the window seat. Let us pity the blind. But there are other people to be pitied, almost as much as they. Do you know how Eyes and No-Eyes went out for a walk; No-Eyes found it dull, and said there was nothing to see, but Eyes saw a hundred interesting things, and brought home his handkerchief full of treasures. The people I know are all either "Eyes" or "No-Eyes." Do you wish to know which class you fall into? Let me ask you two or three questions. If you can answer them we shall call you, Eyes. If you cannot, why, learn to answer these and a thousand questions like them. Describe, from memory, one picture in your mother's drawing-room without leaving out a detail. What tree (not shrub) has green leaf-buds? Do you know any birds with white feathers in their tails? If you do not know things such as these, set to work. The world is a great treasure-house full of things to be seen, and each new thing one sees is a new delight.

There is a great deal, again, of joy to be had out of listening—joy which many people miss because *Hearing* is, in their case, an idle servant who does not attend to his business.

Have you ever been in the fields on a spring day and heard nothing at all but your own voice and those of your companions, and then, perhaps, suddenly you have become silent



and you find a concert going on of which you had not heard a note? At first you hear the voices of the birds, then, by degrees, you perceive high voices, low voices and middle voices, small notes and great notes, and you begin to wish you knew who sang each of the songs you can distinguish. Then, as you listen more, you hear more. The chirp of the grasshoppers becomes so noisy that you wonder you can hear yourself speak for it; then the bees have it all to themselves in your hearing; then you hear the hum or the trumpet of smaller insects, and perhaps the tinkle and gurgle of a stream. The quiet place is full of many sounds, and you ask yourself how you could have been there without hearing them. That just shows you how Hearing may sleep at his post. Keep him awake and alive; make him try to hear and know some new sound every day without any help from sight. It is rather a good plan to listen with shut eyes. Have you ever heard the beech leaves fall one by one in the autumn? that is a very nice sound. Have you heard the tap, tap of the woodpecker, or have you heard a thrush breaking snail-shells on a stone? Of course you can tell the difference between one horse and a pair by sound. Can you tell one kind of carriage from another or a grocer's cart from a carriage? Do you know the foot-fall of everybody in the house? Do you know the sound of every bell in the house? Do you listen to peoples' voices, and can you tell by the intonation whether the people are sad or glad, pleased or displeased?

Hearing should tell us a great many interesting things, but the great and perfect joy which we owe to him is *Music*. Many great men have put their beautiful thoughts, not into books, or pictures, or buildings, but into musical score, to be sung with the voice or played on an instrument, and so full are these musical compositions of the minds of their makers, that people who care for music can nearly always tell who has composed the music they hear, even if they have never heard the particular movement before. Thus, in a manner, the composer speaks to them, and they are perfectly happy in listening to what he has to say. Quite little children can sometimes get a good deal of this power; indeed I knew a boy of three years old who knew when his mother was playing Wagner, for example. She played to

him a great deal and he *listened*. Some people have more power in this way than others, but we might all have far more than we do if we listened.

Use every chance you get of hearing music (I do not mean only tunes, though these are very nice), and ask whose music has been played, and, by degrees, you will find out that one composer has one sort of thing to say to you and another speaks other things; these messages of the musicians cannot be put into words, so there is no way of hearing them if we do not train our ear to listen. A great help towards learning to hear music is to know one's notes, to be able to tell with one's eyes shut any note or chord that is struck on the piano or sung with the voice. This is as entertaining as a puzzle, and if we find that we are rather dull of hearing at first we need not be discouraged. The hearing ear comes, like good batting, with a good deal of practice; and the time will come when in a whole chorus of birds you will be able to distinguish between the different voices, and say which is the thrush, which is the blackbird, which the white-throat, which the black-cap, which the wren, which the chaffinch and which the redbreast. Think how happy the person must be for whom every bird's note is the voice of a friend whom he knows!

(To be continued.)